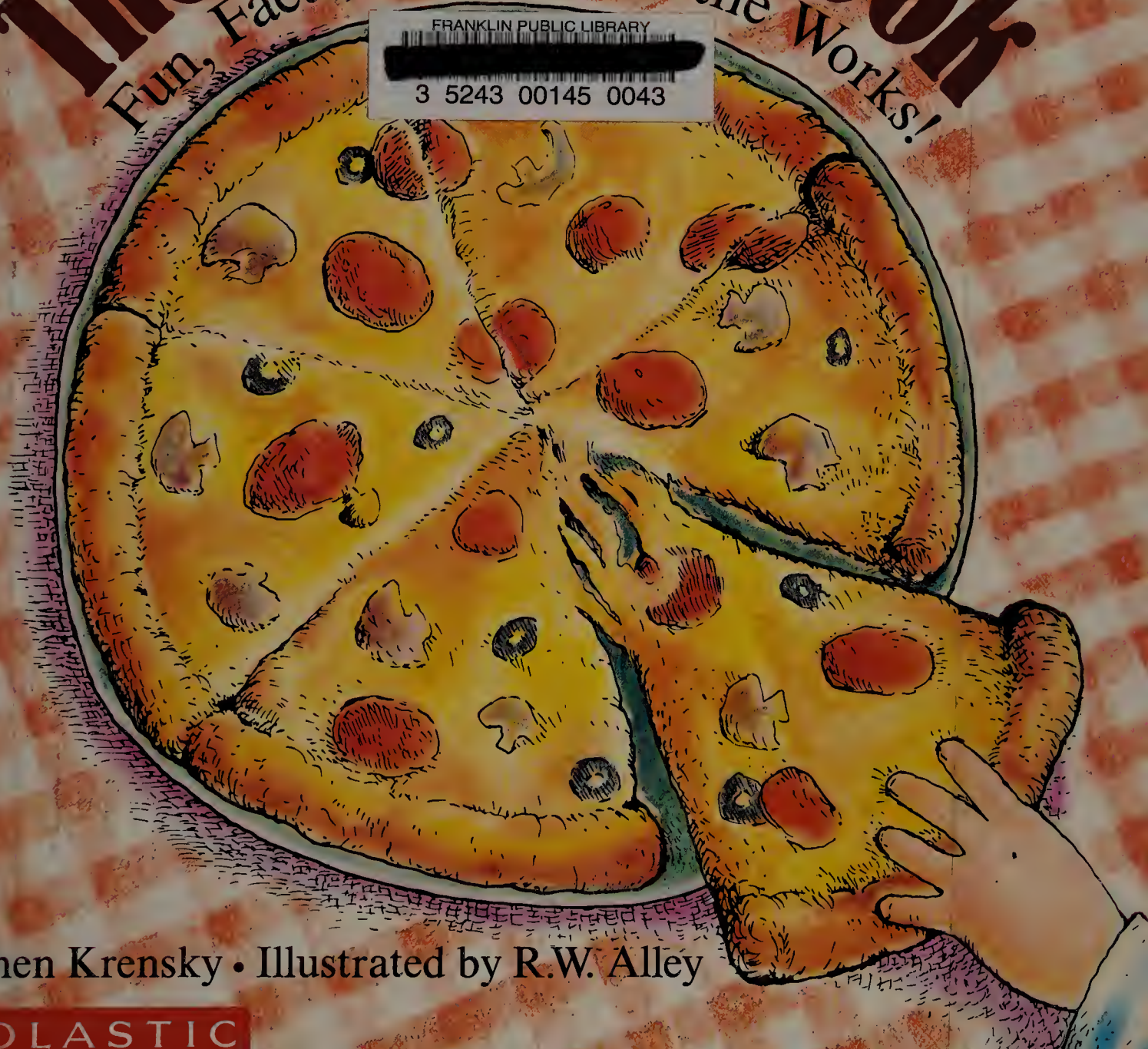


# The PIZZA BOOK

Fun, Facts, a Recipe — the Works!

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Stephen Krensky • Illustrated by R.W. Alley

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Krensky, Stephen  
The pizza book

1992

# The PIZZA Book

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by Stephen

R. W. Alley



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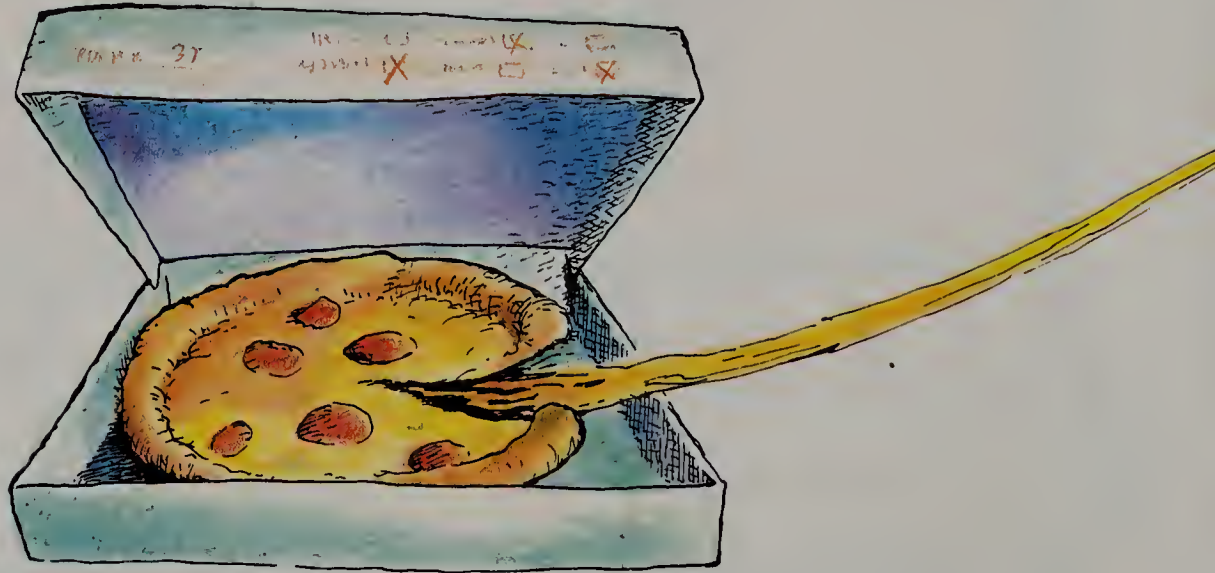
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The author would like to thank *Pizza Today* magazine for providing some of the facts and figures presented in this book.

For Andrew and Peter,  
who like half-olive and half-cheese the best  
—S.K.



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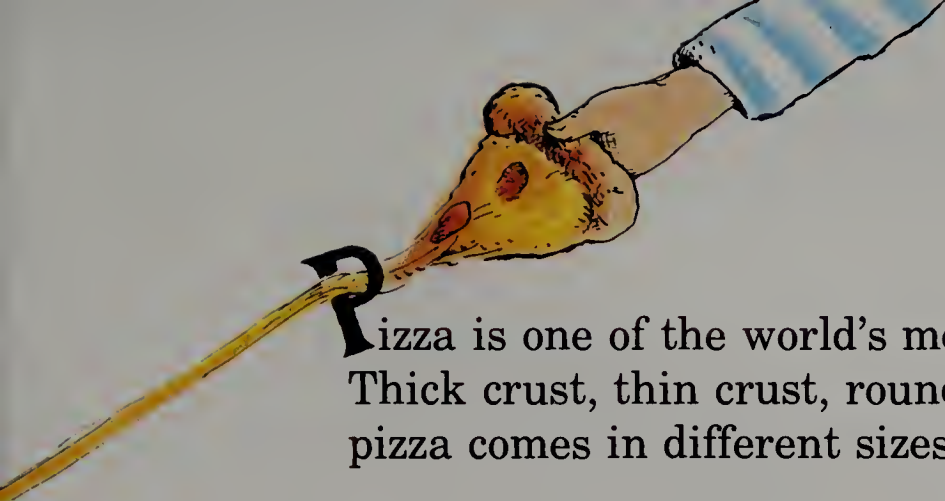
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Pizza is one of the world's most popular foods. Thick crust, thin crust, round or square, pizza comes in different sizes and tastes.





The word *pizza* means pie in Italian.  
Italy is where pizza was invented.






People were eating pizza in Italian cities  
like Pompeii more than 2,000 years ago.



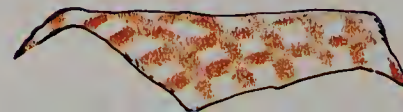
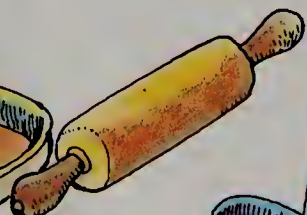
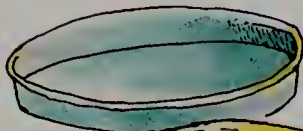
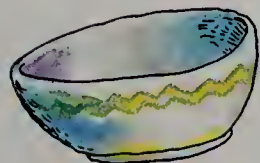


And, of course, people are still eating pizza today. You can make your own pizza following the directions in this book.

Sometimes, though, you will need help. Whenever you see this helping hand , get an adult to help you with that step.

These are the tools you will need:

- 1 large mixing bowl
- 1 covered pot
- 1 measuring cup
- 1 cheese grater
- 2 round 12-inch pans  
(or a 16-inch cookie sheet)
- 1 rolling pin
- 1 ladle
- 1 knife
- 1 set of measuring spoons
- 1 kitchen towel





You will also need these basic ingredients  
to make one 16-inch pizza or two 12-inch pizzas:

unbleached all-purpose flour (3 cups)

active dry yeast (1 package)

tomato paste (one 6-ounce can)

crushed tomatoes (one 28-ounce can)

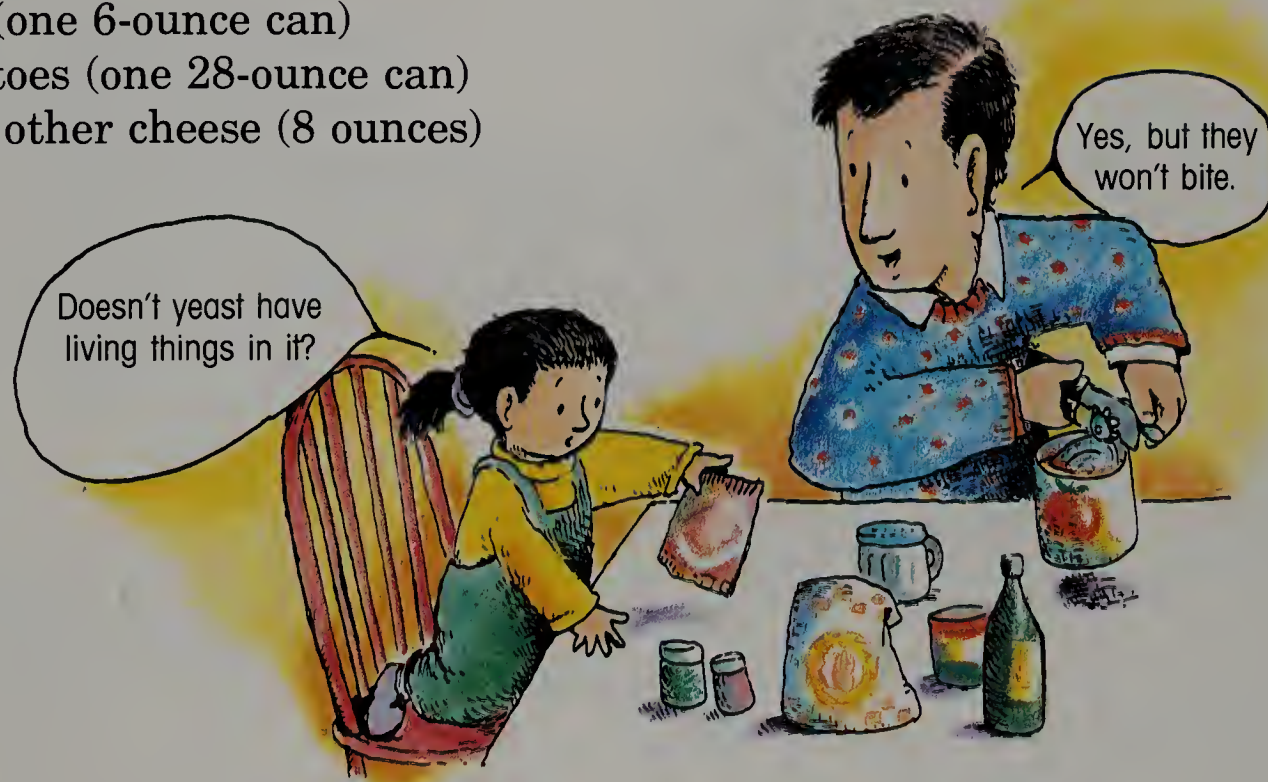
mozzarella or other cheese (8 ounces)

salt

basil

oregano

salad oil



You may want to add other toppings.  
Here are some choices:

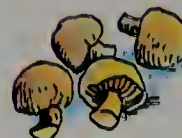
1 green pepper

2 small yellow onions

pepperoni (8 ounces)

mushrooms (1 pint)

Of course, you may also try other toppings.



Making pizza starts with the crust. Pizza crust is a kind of bread. Thousands of years ago, people began making bread from wheat. Most of this bread was hard and dry like a stale cracker.



About 3,100 years ago, the Egyptians changed their recipe for bread. They added yeast to it. Yeast is made of tiny cells that grow in contact with water and flour. When the Egyptians added yeast to their bread, the bread would puff up or rise. This new bread was softer and tasted better. It was also easier to chew.



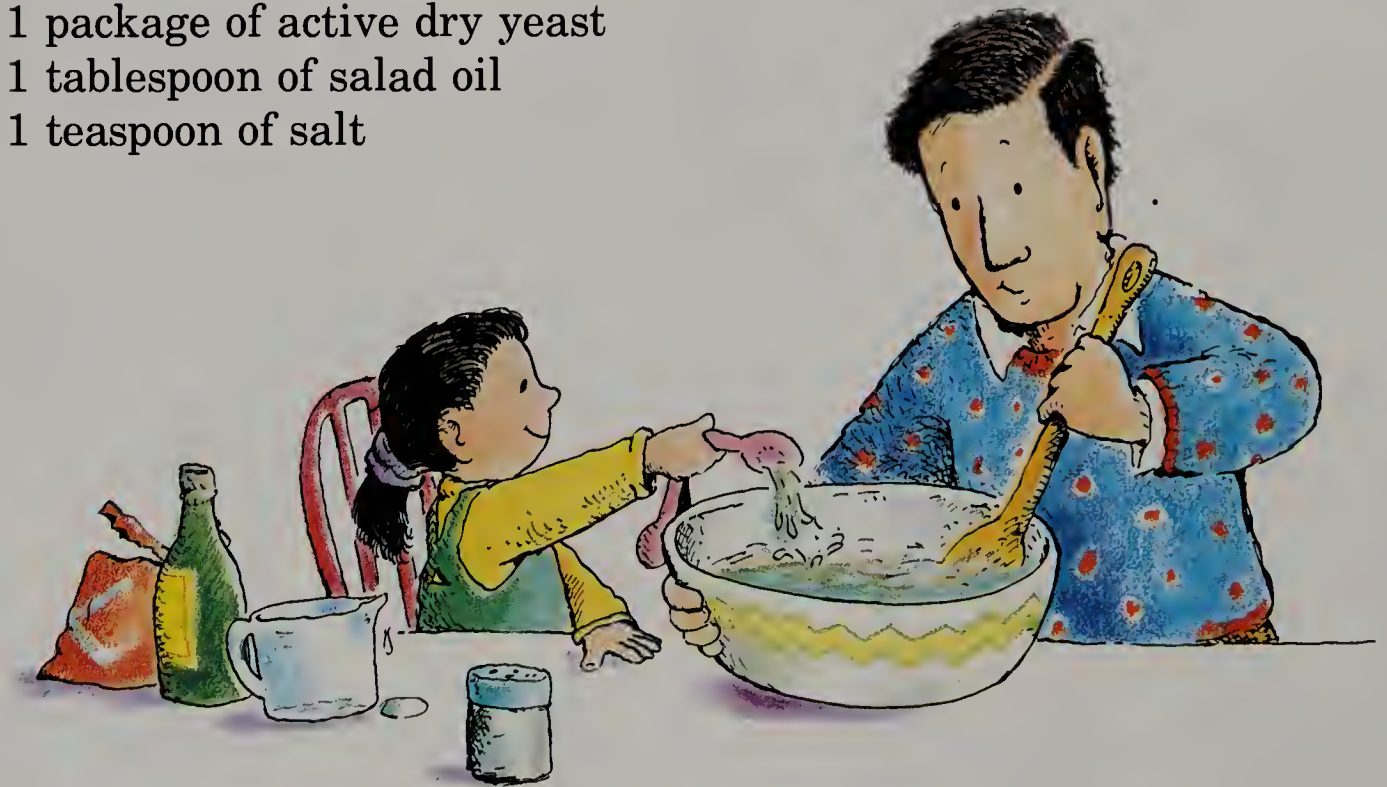




Pizza dough is like bread dough except that it has twice as much yeast. It needs the extra yeast to puff up more quickly because it isn't baked as long as regular bread.

Before you start, carefully wash your hands. Then put these ingredients together in a large bowl:

- 1 cup of warm water
- 1 package of active dry yeast
- 1 tablespoon of salad oil
- 1 teaspoon of salt



Stir the mixture well and then let it sit for five minutes.



Now add 3 cups of flour. Stir well.

Then shape the dough into a ball with your hands.

Put the dough on a clean surface and knead it for about five minutes. (Squeeze it between your fingers a lot to make sure it is mixed up well.) If the dough is sticky, mix in a little more flour. The dough should be smooth and stretchy when you are done.

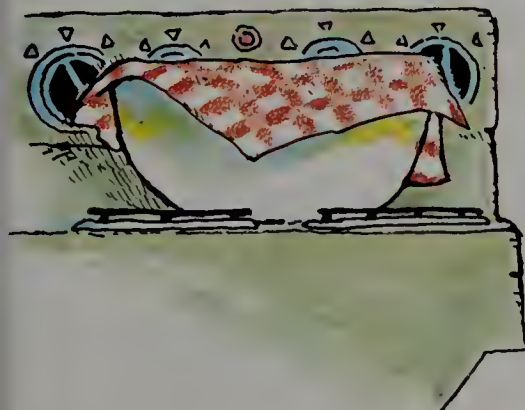


Put the dough back into the bowl and cover it with a towel.



Set the oven to “warm.”

Put the bowl on top of the oven and let it sit for 40 minutes.



Let's make the tomato sauce while we're waiting.

We can get the toppings ready, too.





The first pizzas didn't have much on them. The ancient Greeks and Romans used only a few toppings. They flavored the crusts with herbs and olive oil. Later they added chopped vegetables.





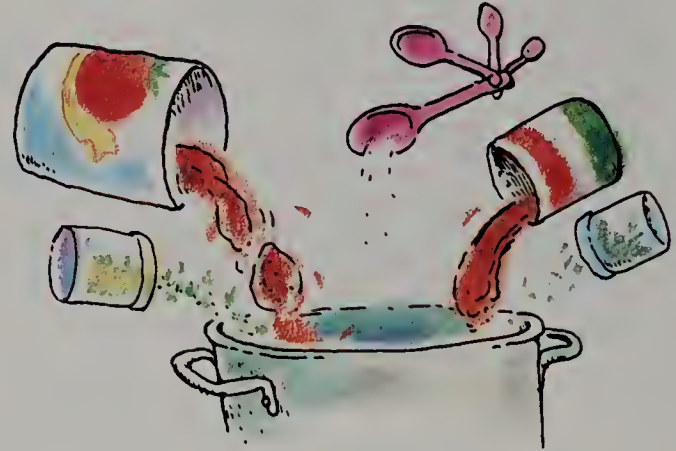


Tomato sauce came later. Tomatoes themselves originally were grown by Native Americans. There were no tomatoes in Europe until sailors brought back seeds from America in the 1500s. For a while, though, tomatoes were not very popular. Some people even thought they were poisonous. A recipe for tomato sauce was finally published in Rome in 1705.



To make pizza sauce, start with the can of crushed tomatoes.  
Empty it into a large pot.  
Add the following:

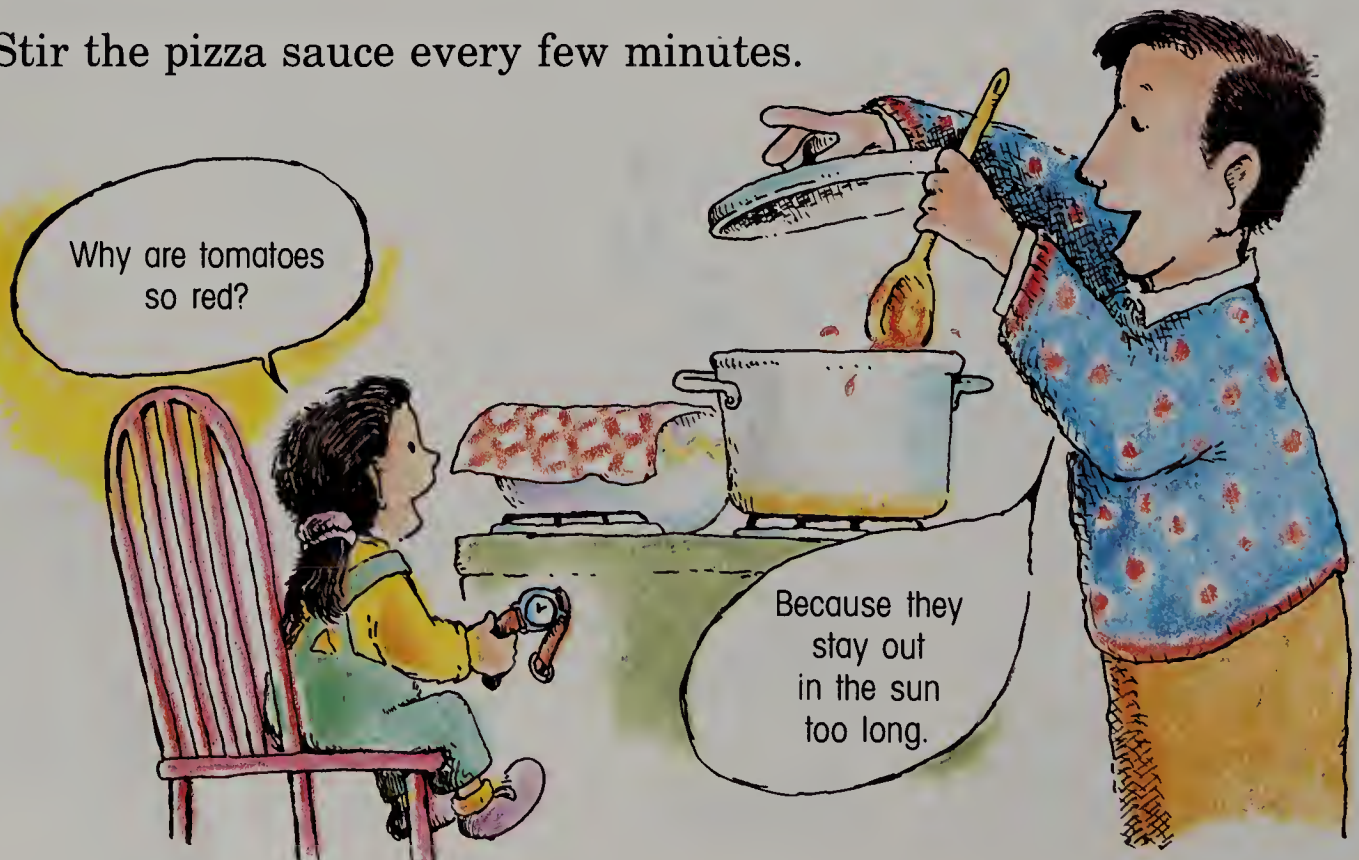
- 1/2 can of tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon basil



Stir the ingredients.

Put the pot on the stove and cover it. Bring the sauce to a boil. Then turn down the heat to let the sauce simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.

Stir the pizza sauce every few minutes.





Now pick the toppings you want. Wash the vegetables before using them. Then get ready to cut them up.



Slice the pepperoni into thin slices.



Cut the pepper into strips or cubes.



Cut the onions into rings or chop them into small pieces.



Slice the mushrooms into thin pieces.





In 1889, Queen Margherita of Italy visited Naples. She was very popular. Crowds lined the streets to watch her pass by.



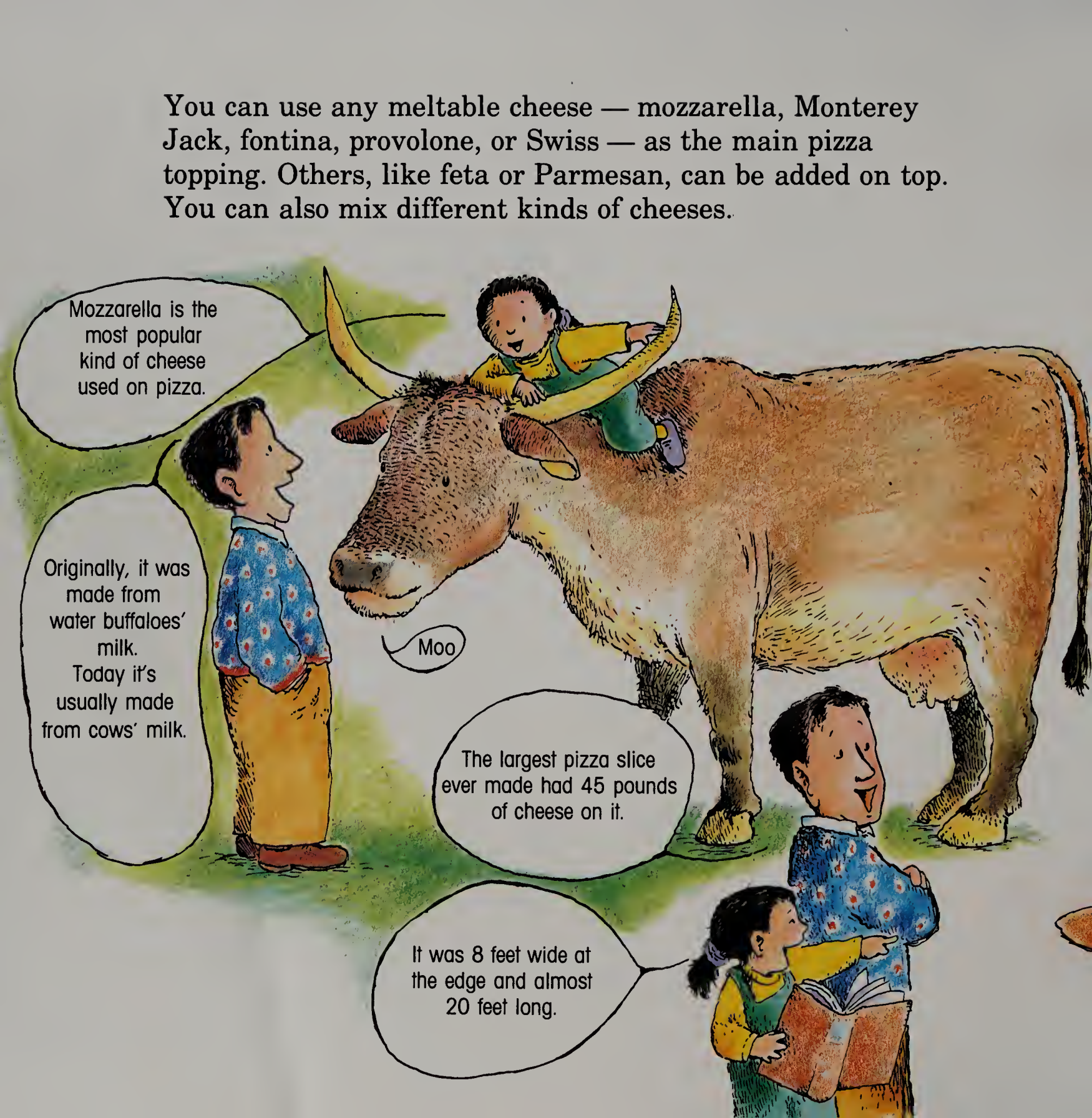




The famous pizzeria chef Raffaele Esposito was asked to make a pizza for the queen. He made one that included a new topping — white mozzarella cheese. He combined it with red tomatoes and green basil to match the colors of the Italian flag. The queen liked this pizza the best. In Italy it is still called *pizza alla margherita*.



You can use any meltable cheese — mozzarella, Monterey Jack, fontina, provolone, or Swiss — as the main pizza topping. Others, like feta or Parmesan, can be added on top. You can also mix different kinds of cheeses.



Mozzarella is the most popular kind of cheese used on pizza.

Originally, it was made from water buffaloes' milk. Today it's usually made from cows' milk.

Moo

The largest pizza slice ever made had 45 pounds of cheese on it.

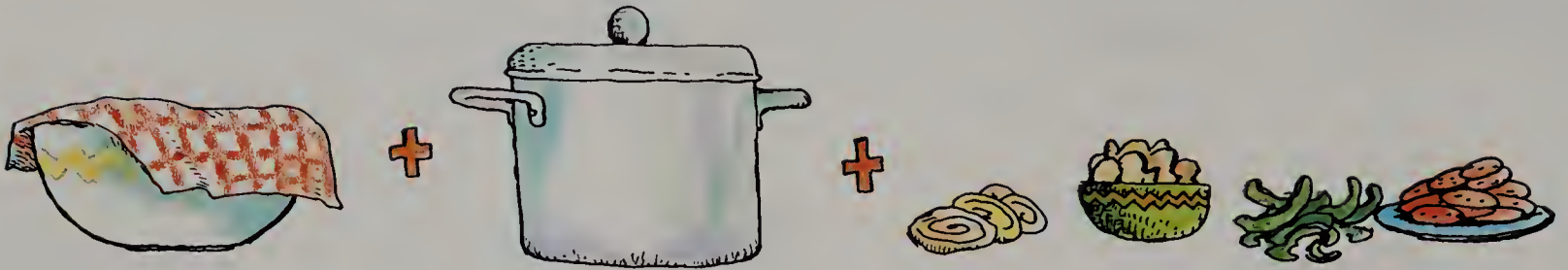
It was 8 feet wide at the edge and almost 20 feet long.



Cut the mozzarella or other cheese into thin slices or shred it with a grater. (If you have bought shredded mozzarella, you may skip this step.)



Now it's time to put the pizza together.



Start by sprinkling a little flour on a clean table (to keep the dough from sticking).



Then take the dough out of the bowl. Do you want to make one large pizza or two smaller pizzas? If you want to make two, divide the dough into two equal lumps on the table.

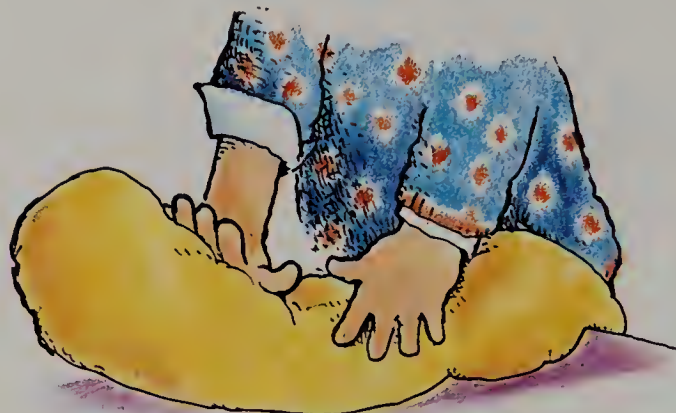




Now punch down the risen dough.



Next, stretch and flatten each lump of dough into a rough circle.



Take a rolling pin and gently roll up and down the dough a few times. Gently roll across the dough a few times, too. Be careful not to press too hard. However, make sure the uncooked pizza crust is less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick.

Use your fingers to smooth the edges into a round shape.





Now put the dough into a pan or on a cookie sheet.

Use a ladle to pour the tomato sauce in the middle of the dough.

Spread out the tomato sauce evenly with the bottom of the ladle. Make sure the sauce covers the dough enough so that no dough shows through.

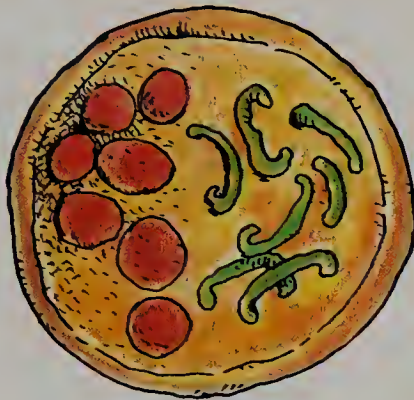


Always leave a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-bare border along the pizza's outer edge. This will allow the edge to rise a little higher than the rest of the pizza while baking.

Arrange the toppings in patterns.  
You can work your way around the edge



or fill in different parts  
of the middle



or mix them  
all together.



You can even use a topping to spell out a name or a greeting.





Then sprinkle the cheese over the pizza.  
Try to sprinkle it evenly so that the cheese  
doesn't clump in any one place.





Hundreds of years ago, many Italian villagers didn't have ovens of their own. They all used a town oven to bake pizza and bread and other things. Later, street vendors sold pizzas on the streets. To keep the price down, they cut up the pizzas and sold them one slice at a time.



About 1830, the first true pizzeria opened in Naples. It had a wood-fired brick-lined oven. It was a big success. Soon Naples was crowded with pizzerias.







To bake the pizza, preheat the oven to 425 degrees.  
Once the oven is hot, place the pizza inside.

Do you know  
what kind of pizza  
penguins like best?

Frozen pizza,  
of course.



Bake the pizza for about 25 minutes. (The time will vary from oven to oven.)



When the raised edge is brown, take the pizza out of the oven.

Let it sit for two minutes to cool.



Make two or four cuts across the pizza with a knife. (Two cuts will make four slices and four cuts will make eight slices.)



## SERVE AND EAT!

According to the *Guinness Book of Trivia Records*, the largest pizza ever made was over 80 feet wide, weighed 18,664 pounds, and was cut into 60,318 slices.



That's quite a mouthful.







Americans eat an average of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  pizzas per person each year. That's 90 acres of pizza every day.





## RECIPE SUMMARY:

### INGREDIENTS:

#### *For dough*

1 cup of warm water  
1 package of active dry yeast  
1 tablespoon of salad oil  
1 teaspoon of salt  
3 cups of flour

#### *For sauce*

1 28-ounce can of crushed tomatoes  
½ of 6-ounce can of tomato paste  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon oregano  
½ teaspoon basil

#### *For toppings*

12 to 16 ounces mozzarella or other cheese  
pepperoni, green pepper, mushrooms, or onions  
Preheat the oven to 425 degrees before you begin.

In a large bowl, mix the water, salad oil, yeast, and salt. Let the mixture sit for five minutes. Then add the flour and stir it well. Shape the dough into a ball on a clean surface. Knead well for about five minutes. (If the dough is sticky, add a little more flour.) The dough should be smooth and stretchy when you're done. Put the dough back into the bowl. Cover it with a towel and let it sit for 40 minutes on top of an oven set to "warm."

Mix crushed tomatoes, tomato paste, salt, oregano, and basil together in a large pot. Stir, then bring the sauce to a boil. Let it simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Wash any vegetables you are using as toppings. Then cut them into strips or cubes. Slice the pepperoni thinly. Cut the cheese into thin slices or shred it with a grater.

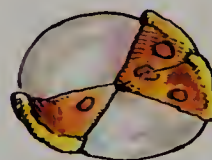
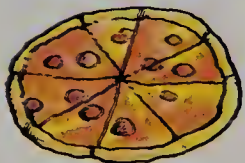
Now put the pizza together: first sprinkle a little flour on a clean table. Use the dough in one lump or divide it into two. Punch down the dough. Then stretch and flatten it into rough circles using a rolling pin. (Don't press too hard!) Make sure the crust is no more than ½-inch thick. Smooth the edges into a round shape using your fingers, and then put the dough into a pan or on a cookie sheet.

With a ladle, pour the tomato sauce in the middle of the dough. Spread the sauce evenly with the bottom of the ladle. Make sure the dough doesn't show through, but always leave ½ inch bare along the pizza's outer edge.

Take the toppings and spread them over the top of the pizza. Sprinkle the cheese evenly over the toppings.

Put the pizza in the oven and bake for about 25 minutes. When the raised edge is brown, take it out of the oven. Let it cool for two minutes. Make two or four cuts across the pizza.

**SERVE AND EAT!**



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Do you know...

- how the first pizzas were made?
- which topping people like best on their pizza?
- how to make your *own* pizza?

Here's a delicious slice of pizza history and fun trivia  
...and an easy-to-follow recipe, too!



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